

## NOSTALGIA ADVERTISING AND THE INFLUENCE OF NOSTALGIA PRONENESS

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*Nostalgia, or a "yearning for yesterday," is a frequently used advertising appeal. However, the impact of a consumer's propensity to be nostalgic, i.e., nostalgia proneness, has not been assessed. Respondents in this study were exposed to ads with nostalgia (test ads) and to those with no nostalgia or contemporary ads (control ads). The study first examined the influence of individuals' nostalgia proneness upon the nostalgia intensity toward the ad and the nostalgia intensity toward the brand/company that sponsored the ad. Second, age, and its relationship to nostalgia proneness, was assessed. Finally, nostalgia proneness and its affect on gender was considered. Findings indicated that nostalgia proneness was influential on most of the variables examined in this study. Implications for marketers, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research were presented*

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### INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest challenges to advertisers today is to use techniques that are the most effective in communication to a selected target market. Nostalgia advertising is one of a plethora of techniques available to facilitate this communication. Nostalgia advertising, which uses artifacts and/or themes that hark back to the past, has gained notable popularity in recent years. Researchers have attempted to explain the emergence of nostalgia, or the bittersweet yearning for the past (Hirsch 1992), as a dominant theme in society. Some conclude that nostalgia is particularly prominent in a culture during a transitional period such as the end of a century. This condition is called the *fin de siecle* effect, "endism," or the "end-of-the-century malaise" (Miller 1990; Stern 1992). It is a time of cultural anxiety since there is a perceived discontinuity between the centuries, the old one metaphorically dying, the new one still on the horizon. Therefore, the public may look toward the less threatening and comfortable past rather than face the present or future. Nostalgic

escapism has been illustrated in the writings and artwork of the "decadent" or "aesthetic" movement of the late nineteenth century.

Since the completion of the twentieth century marked not only approaching the end of a century, but also the end of a millennium, the media manifestations of nostalgia grew increasingly evident. The largest group in the U.S. population, baby boomers, is now beginning to face its own mortality with the first of its members reaching the age of 50 in 1996. The 50 to 65 year old age group is very likely to show interest in possessions that bring back pleasing memories. Stern (1992) concludes that when demographic factors are combined with a temporal phenomenon that hasn't occurred in a thousand years, a strong proliferation in nostalgic themes can be expected.

An alternative explanation regarding the emergence of nostalgia as a dominant theme in society is provided by others (Lowenthal 1985; Hirsch 1992), who state that the use of nostalgia increases as consumers become more dissatisfied with life as it is today. Consumers look to the past for comfort. Based on these statements, Baker and Kennedy (1994) conclude that nostalgia is even more evident in hard economic times.

Nevertheless, America has been in an era of "rampant nostalgia" (Lowenthal 1985): old clothes, old music, old recipes, an obsessive search for family roots, an endemic concern for preservation, and the appeal of national heritage. There is a tendency to value anything old, simply because it is old. Evidence of this behavior is illustrated in the memorabilia and serious collectors that make up flea markets, swap meets, and antique shops. It is collections of the objects at these events or outlets that can arouse nostalgic feelings. Simple objects such as clothing, clocks, or coins can serve as stimuli for arousal of sacred associations with the past.

Nostalgia is reflected, not only in the latest preservation efforts, but also in the latest architectural designs. Walt Disney Company developed Celebration, Florida, a town with the look and feel of a 1940s neighborhood. Jacobs Field in Cleveland and Oriole Park at Camden Yards are designed to look like turn-of-the-century ballparks (Naughton and Vlasic 1998).

Music may serve as a nostalgic stimulus. Holbrook and Schindler (1992) cite David Frishberg's works as possibly the greatest example of an artist whose lyrics embrace memories of consumer behavior that form links with the "dear departed past." Although not well-known, Frishberg ranks as one of the greatest contemporary jazz composers, particularly in his "uncanny ability to capture the intricacies and delicacies of the nostalgic consumption experience" (Holbrook and Schindler 1991, p. 19). Nostalgia has major applicability to marketing as well.

### **Nostalgia Marketing**

Advertising's major role in marketing has been to communicate a message concerning a product or service to potential consumers. However, with a mature economy and consequently high levels of competitive intensity in most product and service areas, advertisers are challenged to design messages that stand out among others in the marketplace, i.e., to give messages stopping power or the ability to get the consumer's attention. Advertising clutter is a problem that has grown worse in recent years and

will probably continue to grow into the next millennium.

One attention-getting technique that advertisers are using to break through advertising clutter is nostalgia, a longing for the past, or a "yearning for yesterday" (Davis 1979), a type of "retro marketing" (Marconi 1996). Although the term "nostalgia" has been around for centuries, social forecasters and marketing researchers have commented on the increasing visibility of nostalgia themes in the past two decades (Stern 1992). A rising market in nostalgia is turning "yesterday" into a new trend in the consumer products and communications industries (Holbrook 1990).

Product managers are using nostalgia to rejuvenate products, such as the push lawn mower (Richards 1997), or in the introduction of products, such as the Porsche Boxster retro roadster and the Old Navy casual clothing line. Although launched by Gap Incorporated during the 1990s, Old Navy initially used black-and-white ads and store decor from the 1950s to give, according to management, credibility to the brand (Naughton and Vlasic 1998).

Also, product managers are using nostalgia in the reintroduction of products. For example, Schwinn Cycling & Fitness of Boulder, Colorado, introduced reproductions of its Apple and Orange Krates bicycles, originally manufactured from 1968 to 1973 (Albrecht 1998). Orders for the limited reproduction Krates have been five times Schwinn's initial projections. Also, the shaving cream, Burma Shave, is returning to advertising after a 30-year absence, along with its rhyming roadside signs.

However, probably no product reintroduction has been more popular than the Volkswagen (VW) Beetle (Healey 1998). When the model was introduced, former Bug owners, as well as a whole new generation of car buyers, particularly college students, went to VW dealerships to put their names on waiting lists. The new Beetle was even dubbed "Car of the Year for 1998" (Johnson 1998). Although Volkswagen tried to appeal to all age segments of the population, Volkswagen Beetle ads communicate nostalgic messages, such as "Less

flower. More power,” and “If you sold your soul in the ‘80s, here’s your chance to buy it back” (Naughton and Vlasic 1998).

The Beetle is not alone in the retro marketing of automobiles. Ford has launched a Thunderbird coupe that borrows from its original 1950s classic styling. Chrysler’s Plymouth Prowler embodies a return to the days of souped-up cars portrayed in movies such as *American Graffiti*. The 300M sport sedan, also by Chrysler, attempts to evoke memories of the firm’s famous 300 series muscle cars, which started racing at the Daytona Speedway in 1955. An auto analyst recognizes that these two cars will probably not realize an incredible sales volume for the company, but these particular models are valuable for strengthening a manufacturer’s brand image (Hawaleshka 1998).

Using the package as advertising has been a focus as well in nostalgia marketing. Coca-Cola sales increased by double digits after the company recreated a plastic version of its famous contour bottle in 1994. Necco wafer sales increased 25 percent over a two-year period, partly due to a packaging redesign that borrowed from its past (Naughton and Vlasic 1998).

Advertisements from the 1950s and 1960s are now returning as sponsors try to tap into the warm, nostalgic feeling that the sponsors hope consumers have for, if not the actual products, then the old commercials themselves. Maxwell House has been running archival footage of percolating coffee pots. Ford Motor Company has shot commercials to look like historic, grainy footage, hoping that consumers will equate longevity with quality (Naughton and Vlasic 1998).

### Nostalgia Advertising

Much of the nostalgia advertising in the marketplace appears to be directed toward low- involvement purchase situations, i.e., consumer involvement in the purchase decision is low and there are minimal differences among brand alternatives (Belch and Belch 1998). The advertiser recognizes that in these situations the consumer may focus on non-message

content elements such as music, characters, symbols, and slogans or jingles instead of actual message content. Nostalgia themes would appear to fit in this list of non-message techniques or tactics.

Marconi (1996) notes that although nostalgic messages may be attention-getting and entertaining, their effectiveness in influencing communication effects, such as increasing the level of brand awareness and brand attitude, and ultimately increasing sales, has not been firmly established. Research has yet to substantially support the contribution of nostalgia advertising to communication effects, i.e., the lasting cognitive associations in the consumer’s mind related to the brand that advertisements establish (Ward and Robertson 1973). If nostalgia advertising does not contribute to communication effects, marketers would be prudent to redirect their funds in the advertising mix.

Many firms use nostalgia in at least a portion of their advertising strategy. For example, General Foods introduced Maxwell House 1892 Slow-Roasted Coffee in a nineteenth century design container. Print advertising for the product notes that 1892 was a very good year for coffee and that merchants of the time did things differently, with a reverence for the old way of making things. Television advertising for the 1892 coffee contained a depiction of small town activities and patriotism in a setting from the distant past (Havlena and Holak 1991). Kellogg’s Rice Krispies celebrated its sixtieth anniversary with its 1920s advertising. Hershey recreated a “Vintage Edition” package design from 1929 for its chocolate bars, and Dial Corporation packaged 20 Mule Team Borax in a vintage-design box.

Advertisers have also resurrected old slogans, such as “Timex takes a licking and keeps on ticking,” “I’d walk a mile for a Camel,” and “I want my Maypo” (Holbrook 1990). Ovaltine, Alka-Seltzer, Shake ‘n Bake, and others have used advertising from the 1950s and 1960s, hoping to elicit nostalgic feelings toward at least the old commercials, if not the products themselves (Marconi 1996). Quaker Oats Life cereal used the generation-old Mikey

campaign as the centerpiece of a new, mom-target promotion (Thompson 1997). Bristol-Myers Squibb Company re-released its 1968 "Excedrin Headache" commercial, which features a busy homemaker battling an uncontrollable washing machine (Stern 1992). Leaf Incorporated used a parody of 1960s-style singing groups, called "Frankie and the Switzers," to advertise Switzer's licorice and reintroduced Choo-Choo Charlie to promote Good and Plenty candy. Spokesperson "Punchy" was reintroduced to advertise Hawaiian Punch. To counter the trend to microwave popcorn, Jiffy Pop popcorn attempted to elicit nostalgic memories with the theme, "Some things are even better than you remember." Warner-Lambert reintroduced its Beeman's Clove and Blackjack chewing gum, which are brands that will most likely be recognized by older, mature consumers. Even though nostalgia advertising was initially directed toward advanced age cohorts, marketers have discovered that even Generation X consumers are attracted to "retro" products; therefore, much of the accompanying advertising employs nostalgia elements (Ironson 1999). The following table summarizes the plethora of marketing applications of the nostalgia techniques presented above.

There are several contributions of this research that make it significant to the marketing academician and practitioner, especially advertisers and product managers. First and foremost, the research will contribute to our understanding of which products are and which are not amenable to the nostalgia technique. If nostalgia advertising increases communication effects, is the increase limited to certain types of products? The answer to this question may help marketers determine the limits of the application of the technique. Additionally, the influence of nostalgia proneness to nostalgia advertising and its communication effects will be assessed. Is nostalgia advertising effective only with those individuals who have a significant propensity to be nostalgic? The findings will help determine the appropriateness of this technique for audiences both high and low in nostalgia proneness, as opposed to only narrowly defined target markets of nostalgia prone consumers.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Nostalgia is defined as an emotional state in which an individual yearns for an idealized or sanitized version of an earlier time period (Stern 1992). The literature distinguishes between two types of nostalgia, personal and historical (Havlena and Holak 1991; Stern 1992). Personal nostalgia is described as an idealized past based on a personal perspective (Stern 1992). It depends upon an idealized reconstructed past, not necessarily a happy childhood. Historical nostalgia, on the other hand, expresses the desire to retreat from the present to a time in the not-so-recent past that is viewed as more pleasant. The past is looked upon as the "good old days" and an escape from present problems and challenges.

Despite nostalgia advertising's widespread use in the marketplace, its efficacy has not been firmly established. Studies of music, motion pictures, movie stars, and fashion products have shown that styles popular during a consumer's youth can influence the consumer's lifelong preferences (Holbrook and Schindler 1989; 1994; 1996). More recent work by Schindler and Holbrook (2003) supports the idea that such effects can occur for any product in which a consumer associates a strong affective experience. Additionally, Pascal, Sprott and Muehling (2002) conducted an exploratory investigation which provided some evidence that advertisements eliciting nostalgic reactions will generate more favorable perceptions of an ad and advertised brand, thus contributing to greater purchase likelihood.

The present exploratory study attempts to determine the influence of nostalgia proneness upon print messages. Research has suggested that individuals vary as to their tendency to experience nostalgic feelings (Holbrook 1993). This tendency, nostalgia proneness, would intuitively provide a positive influence on the consumer's nostalgia intensity toward the ad. Nostalgia intensity may be defined as the strength of the feelings associated with yearning for a sanitized version of an earlier time period (Stern 1992). This rationale yields the following hypothesis:



**TABLE 1**  
**Summary of Nostalgia Examples**

| Organization and/or Product                                 | Nostalgia Technique                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| General Food's Maxwell House coffee                         | Introduced Maxwell House 1982 Slow-Roasted Coffee in a nineteenth century design container, including commercials depicting the distant past |
| Kellogg's Rice Krispies                                     | 1920s advertising to celebrate its 60th anniversary                                                                                          |
| Hershey chocolate bars                                      | a "Vintage Edition" package design from 1912                                                                                                 |
| Dial Corporation's 20 Mule Team Borax                       | a vintage-design box                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Victoria Magazine</i>                                    | an idealized Victorian Age focus                                                                                                             |
| J. Peterman Company "Owner's Manual" direct mail catalogue  | advertises vintage style clothing                                                                                                            |
| <i>Martha Stewart Living</i>                                | editorial text, visual cues, products and promotions tied to a central personal nostalgia theme                                              |
| Timex watches                                               | revitalized the theme, "Timex takes a licking and keeps on ticking"                                                                          |
| Camel cigarettes                                            | revitalized the theme, "I'd walk a mile for a Camel"                                                                                         |
| Maypo hot cereal                                            | revitalized the theme, "I want my Maypo"                                                                                                     |
| <i>Memories</i>                                             | contains articles and advertisements from the past fifty years                                                                               |
| Joe Franklin's <i>Nostalgia</i>                             | feature stories on diners, Nashville's Grand Ole Opry, etc.                                                                                  |
| Ovaltine, Alka-Seltzer, Shake 'n Bake and others            | Use advertising from the 1950s and 1960s                                                                                                     |
| Quaker Oats Life cereal                                     | using the generation-old Mikey campaign                                                                                                      |
| Bristol-Myers Squibb Company's Excedrin                     | re-released the 1968 "Excedrin Headache" commercial                                                                                          |
| Leaf Incorporated's Switzer's licorice                      | using a parody of 1960s-style singing groups                                                                                                 |
| Leaf Incorporated's Good and Plenty candy                   | reintroducing Choo-Choo Charlie                                                                                                              |
| Hawaiian Punch                                              | Spokesperson Punch                                                                                                                           |
| Jiffy Pop popcorn                                           | attempting to elicit nostalgic memories with "Some things are even better than you remember"                                                 |
| Sonic drive-in restaurants                                  | using Frankie Avalon to promote a 1950s image                                                                                                |
| Studebaker's dinner and dance club chain                    | using hits from the 1950s through the 1970s that employees perform once per hour                                                             |
| Joe Franklin's "Nostalgicize"                               | an exercise video with 1940s music                                                                                                           |
| Warner-Lambert's Beeman's, Clove, and Blackjack chewing gum | reintroduction of these brands                                                                                                               |
| Coca-Cola                                                   | reintroduced its old-fashioned contour green-tinted bottle                                                                                   |

**H<sub>1</sub>:** A positive relationship exists between nostalgia proneness and nostalgia intensity toward the advertisement.

Similarly, the propensity to have nostalgic feelings will positively affect the consumer's nostalgic feelings toward the brand or company represented in the advertisement, therefore:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** A positive relationship exists between nostalgia proneness and nostalgia intensity toward the brand/company.

The literature indicates that the current boom of nostalgia-based products, advertising and promotional messages, magazines, and radio and television programming is targeted largely to the baby boomers and the mature consumer groups (Havlena and Holak 1991). Therefore, age is hypothesized to be positively related to nostalgia proneness, i.e., consumers become more nostalgic as they advance in age:

**H<sub>3</sub>:** A positive relationship exists between age and nostalgia proneness.

The literature is not consistent regarding a possible relationship between nostalgia proneness and gender. Sherman and Newman (1977-78) found no differences in nostalgia proneness between genders. In contrast, Stern (1992) proposed that each gender may evaluate different stimuli as nostalgic and may articulate nostalgia responses with differing intensity. Other authors suggest that, although men and women may differ in the items that evoke feelings of nostalgia (Baker and Kennedy 1994), males tend to be more nostalgic than females (Davis 1979; Havlena and Holak 1991). In contrast, the conventional wisdom among marketing practitioners is that women are more inclined to express emotional feelings than men. The greeting card industry is one good example of women being more expressive of their emotions, with Hallmark Corporation reporting their primary target market (predominantly women age 25-45) purchases an average of 46 cards per year (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 2003). Based on this rationale, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Women are more nostalgia prone than men.

## METHODOLOGY

### Sample

The convenience sample for this study consisted of two groups. The first group was made up of business and non-business graduate students at a medium-size Midwestern university (with the exclusion of international students since the nostalgia technique tends to be cultural-specific). The initial sample consisted of 510 graduate business and psychology students. However, the following respondents' questionnaires were removed from the study: 78 (15 percent) were international students, 30 (6 percent of the initial total sample) were 23 years of age or younger, and 15 (3 percent) were both less than 23 years of age and international students. Only those age 24 and above were included in the study since Holbrook and Schindler (1991) found that respondents were generally susceptible to nostalgic feelings starting at age 24. Based on these demographic conditions, the sample consisted of 387 graduate students at a medium-sized Midwestern university who were US citizens and at least 24 years of age. A total of 91 questionnaires with missing or incomplete data were removed. The final number of respondents in the first group was 296 for a completion rate of 76 percent.

The second group of respondents consisted of mature consumers from a nutrition site sponsored by the Alabama Council on Aging and various assisted living facilities in the rural Southeastern United States. The initial sample consisted of 85 consumers (50 years of age or older). A total of 29 questionnaires with missing data were removed. Therefore, there were 56 useable questionnaires in the mature consumer group for a completion rate of 66 percent. The total of these two groups and thus the sample size for the study was 352 for an overall completion rate of 59 percent.

### Instrument

Each respondent was shown one of eight color magazine ads, all of which represented low-involvement purchase decisions, i.e., two food products (cookies, bottled water) and two household cleaning products (bathroom cleaner, window cleaner). Each product was represented by a pair of ads: one nostalgia ad and one contemporary ad (void of nostalgia). The respondents were then asked to complete a brief questionnaire. The nostalgia intensity scale used by Baker and Kennedy (1994) was used to measure the intensity of feeling of nostalgia toward the ad. This scale indicates the emotional level felt by the respondent and consists of six items. The reliability of these items in this study was 0.81.

In addition, the subject may have experienced feelings of nostalgia toward the brand and/or the sponsoring organization. Zeitlin and Westwood (1986) note that emotional responses to an advertisement encompass reactions including nostalgia, delight, irritation, etc. Nostalgia toward the brand or sponsor is distinctly different from emotional product connotations, and includes emotional responses like trust and affection that continue long after advertising exposure. Therefore, a similar scale was constructed to follow the nostalgia intensity scale to measure the intensity of feeling of nostalgia toward the brand/company. The reliability of these items in this study was 0.77.

Holbrook (1993) developed a nostalgia proneness index to assess individual propensity to express nostalgic feelings. This index was based on a factor analysis of 20 original statements on a nine-point Likert agree/disagree scale. The confirmatory factor analysis of the resulting eight-item index suggested its potential usefulness in future research (Holbrook 1993). The eight items proposed by Holbrook (1993) were factor analyzed using the principal axis extraction method. The solution was followed by an oblique rotation because it was assumed a priori that some of the attitudes might be correlated (see Ford et al. 1986, p. 296; Gerbing and Anderson 1988, p.189). Two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were extracted. The study of the data revealed

two distinct factors or components of nostalgia proneness: a macro factor and a micro factor; the reliability of each factor was 0.81 and 0.78, respectively.

Each component was represented by four of the eight-items in the scale. The macro (restemmed or reverse-scored) statements included the following: "Technological change will insure a brighter future," "History involves a steady improvement in human welfare," "Steady growth in GNP has brought increased human happiness," and "Modern business constantly builds a better tomorrow." The micro statements included the following: "They don't make 'em like they used to," "Things used to be better in the good old days," "Products are getting shoddier and shoddier," and "We are experiencing a decline in the quality of life." The macro factor was named societal nostalgia proneness and the micro factor was named individual nostalgia proneness.

### ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Hypothesis 1 was tested using a simple correlation between individual nostalgia proneness (INP) and nostalgia intensity toward the ad (NIAD). The result of the correlation (see Table 4) was 0.272 ( $p < 0.01$ ). This statistically significant result indicates that a positive relationship exists between individual nostalgia proneness and the nostalgia intensity toward the ad. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

Hypothesis 2 was tested using a simple correlation between individual nostalgia proneness (INP) and nostalgia intensity toward the brand/company (NIBC). The result of the correlation was 0.146 ( $p < 0.01$ ). This result indicates that there is significant relationship between nostalgia proneness and the nostalgia intensity toward the brand/company. A propensity to be nostalgic influences nostalgic feeling toward a brand or company. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

Hypothesis 3 was tested using a simple correlation between individual nostalgia proneness (INP), societal nostalgia proneness (SNP) and age (AGE). The correlation between individual nostalgia

**TABLE 2**  
**Reliability Coefficients Used in the Study**

|                                                                                                                        | Alpha |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <i>Nostalgia intensity toward the ad (NIAD)</i>                                                                        | 0.81  |
| The ad reminds me of an experience from the past.                                                                      |       |
| The ad makes me think of an experience which I feel sad about because it is over, yet it is a happy memory.            |       |
| This ad does not make me have any feelings about the past (r).                                                         |       |
| I wish I could relive the experience(s) this ad makes me think of.                                                     |       |
| I associate this ad with a happy experience, yet it makes me feel sad.                                                 |       |
| <i>Nostalgia intensity toward the brand/company (NIBC)</i>                                                             | 0.77  |
| The brand/company reminds me of an experience from the past.                                                           |       |
| The brand/company makes me think of an experience which I feel sad about because it is over, yet it is a happy memory. |       |
| I wish I could relive the experience(s) this brand/company makes me think of.                                          |       |
| I associate this brand/company with a happy experience, yet it makes me feel sad.                                      |       |

**TABLE 3**  
**Nostalgia Proneness Scale**

| Items                                                           | Factor |       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------|
|                                                                 | Macro  | Micro |
| They don't make 'em like they used to.                          | .000   | .727  |
| Things used to be better in the good old days.                  | .000   | .779  |
| Products are getting shoddier and shoddier.                     | .000   | .793  |
| Technological change will insure a brighter future. (r)         | .681   | .168  |
| History involves a steady improvement in human welfare. (r)     | .707   | .000  |
| We are experiencing a decline in the quality of life.           | .195   | .452  |
| Steady growth in GNP has brought increased human happiness. (r) | .747   | -.143 |
| Modern business constantly builds a better tomorrow. (r)        | .747   | .000  |
| Eigenvalue                                                      | 2.156  | 2.047 |
| Percent of Variance                                             | 28.8%  | 22.9% |
| Coefficient alpha                                               | .81    | .77   |

r = reverse coded items

proneness and age was 0.254 ( $p < 0.01$ ). The result of the correlation (see Table 4) shows that there was a significant relation between individual nostalgia proneness and age. However, the correlation between societal nostalgia proneness and age was -0.174 ( $p < 0.01$ ). Although the correlation between societal nostalgia proneness and age is significant, it

is in the negative direction. Hence, the hypothesis is not supported.

Holbrook (1993) concluded that although they may be related, age and nostalgia proneness are not redundant variables, i.e., the propensity to have nostalgia feelings does not necessarily increase with



age. This conclusion may have been in reference to individual nostalgia proneness in this study. The results for hypotheses one through three are summarized in the following table.

Hypothesis 4 was tested using a simple independent sample t-test on the variable gender (GENDER). The results of the t-test were significant ( $t=-1.91$ ,  $p<0.10$ ) for individual nostalgia proneness. The mean for females (4.81) was greater than the mean for males (4.47). For societal nostalgia proneness, the t-test results were significant ( $t=-1.90$ ,  $p<0.10$ ). The mean for females (4.61) was also greater than the mean for males (4.30). Therefore, the hypothesis, women are more nostalgia prone than men, is supported from both an individual as well as a societal nostalgia proneness perspective.

### CONCLUSIONS

Some conclusions can be made regarding societal nostalgia proneness and individual nostalgia proneness. Societal and individual nostalgia proneness were influential on variables examined in this study. A positive relationship was found between individual nostalgia proneness and the nostalgia intensity toward the advertisement. That is, those consumers with a higher propensity to be nostalgic from an individual perspective will have stronger feelings toward the nostalgic advertisement. Similarly, a positive relationship was found between individual nostalgia proneness and the nostalgia intensity toward the brand/company. That is, those consumers with a higher propensity to be nostalgic from an individual perspective will have stronger feelings toward the brand/company. A positive relationship also exists between individual nostalgia proneness and age. In other words, consumers with a greater propensity to be nostalgic from an individual perspective will be older. Finally, women are more nostalgia prone than men on both an individual and societal nostalgia proneness level.

In conclusion, some important relationships have been substantiated for future marketing planning. The results provide support that the propensity to have nostalgic feelings can influence several variables of interest to the marketer. This influence

provides several implications for the marketer. The marketer who wishes to employ nostalgia appeals may better identify market segments that are more amenable to nostalgia messages and products. Other marketers may determine whether their products or services would benefit from the nostalgia advertising technique. In any event, an organization's marketing dollars will be spent more effectively.

### Limitations

Several limitations should be noted. First, the advertisements presented to the respondents represented four low-involvement purchase decisions and thus the results may not be generalized to other consumer purchase decisions. Second, the ads were transformational, and thus the results may not be generalized to informational formats. Third, print ads were used in this study and so the results may not be generalized to other media forms. Fourth, because of the two types of nostalgia, personal and historical, respondents may have interpreted the ads differently. These differences may not have been captured by the nostalgia intensity toward the ad measure, which was designed to measure primarily personal nostalgia. Fifth, since the sample was a convenience sample of graduate students and mature consumers, the results may not be generalizable to other populations. Sixth, the two product categories used (food products and household cleaning products) may be gender-specific and thus elicit greater interest and perhaps greater nostalgia intensity for females than males.

### Future Research

Based on, in part, the limitations of the study, there are various suggestions for future research. The results suggest that consumers who are nostalgia prone have positive nostalgia intensity toward the ad and also the brand/company. Future research needs to determine if these nostalgia prone consumers make their purchase decisions based on their feelings of nostalgia intensity toward the ad or the brand/company. Future research needs to examine the impact of high- and low-involvement purchase decisions and their effect on the nostalgia intensity toward the ad and the brand/company.

**TABLE 4**  
**Correlation Table for Relevant Data**

|                          | NIAD    | NIBC    | AGE      | SNP     | INP |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|----------|---------|-----|
| NIAD Pearson Correlation | 1       |         |          |         |     |
| Sig. (2-tailed)          | .       |         |          |         |     |
| N                        | 351     |         |          |         |     |
| NIBC Pearson Correlation | 0.587** | 1       |          |         |     |
| Sig. (2-tailed)          | .000    | .       |          |         |     |
| N                        | 351     | 352     |          |         |     |
| AGE Pearson Correlation  | 0.372** | 0.283** | 1        |         |     |
| Sig. (2-tailed)          | .000    | .000    | .        |         |     |
| N                        | 352     | 352     | 352      |         |     |
| SNP Pearson Correlation  | -0.121* | -0.133* | -0.174** | 1       |     |
| Sig. (2-tailed)          | .023    | .012    | .001     | .       |     |
| N                        | 351     | 352     | 352      | 352     |     |
| INP Pearson Correlation  | 0.272** | 0.146** | 0.254**  | 0.115** | 1   |
| Sig. (2-tailed)          | .000    | .006    | .000     | .032    | .   |
| N                        | 351     | 352     | 352      | 352     | 352 |

NIAD = nostalgia intensity toward the ad; NIBC = nostalgia intensity toward the brand/company; SNP = societal nostalgia proneness; INP = individual nostalgia proneness; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*  $p < 0.05$

**TABLE 5**  
**Independent Sample t-test**

| GENDER                  | N   | Mean   | S.D.   | t      | df  | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|-------------------------|-----|--------|--------|--------|-----|-----------------|
| INP Male                | 180 | 4.4750 | 1.5998 |        |     |                 |
| Female                  | 172 | 4.8096 | 1.6833 |        |     |                 |
| Equal Variances Assumed |     |        |        | -1.912 | 350 | .057            |
| SNP Male                | 180 | 4.3014 | 1.4422 |        |     |                 |
| Female                  | 172 | 4.6076 | 1.5979 |        |     |                 |
| Equal Variances Assumed |     |        |        | -1.889 | 350 | .060            |

This study examined only the print media form to test the effectiveness of nostalgia proneness and its effect on nostalgia intensity toward the ad and the brand/company. Other media forms, such as broadcast ads, need to be used to test the effect of nostalgia proneness on the nostalgia intensity toward the ad. The scale used for measuring nostalgia intensity toward the ad and nostalgia intensity

toward the brand/company needs to be tested over other product/service categories.

The study needs to be replicated using other samples and product categories. A sample composed exclusively of mature consumers and products and/or services involving both high- and low-involvement purchase decisions is a possibility.

Furthermore, other demographic variables, such as income, education, and ethnicity, could be included in the analysis, as well as psychographic variables, such as buying habits and media preferences.

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